

Washington, DC (May 9, 2012)—Today, Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, issued a statement in support of a new alternative proposal by the Postmaster General to reduce window service times at rural post offices before moving to close or consolidate them.

“We have to see the details, but the Postal Service’s new proposal seems like a sensible compromise for preserving service for millions of Americans and achieving hundreds of millions of dollars in much-needed savings,” said Cummings. “In many rural towns and neighborhoods, the post office is the federal government’s only presence in the area. I am encouraged that the Postmaster General is revisiting the idea of shuttering thousands of post offices while also recognizing the need to bring Postal Service operations in line with reduced mail volume.”

The recommended plan, which would be carried out over a two-year period, would allow many of these Post Offices to operate at six, four, or even two-hour intervals, thereby maintaining service for individual and commercial customers. The Postal Service plans to submit this alternative plan to the Postal Regulatory Commission for review later this month.

Since 2007, the Postal Service has faced financial challenges as a result of the increase in electronic communications, the recent economic slowdown, and a statutory mandate to prefund retiree health care benefits at an accelerated rate. In order to preserve the Postal Service’s long-term viability, Congress is currently considering comprehensive postal reform legislation.

Ranking Member Cummings has introduced H.R. 2967, the Innovate to Deliver Act, and has urged the House of Representatives to pass legislation that avoids the unnecessary closure of post offices and mail processing facilities while still addressing the Postal Service’s ongoing financial challenges.